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Church Progress in the Diocese of Quebec.

Sermon

PREACHED BEFORE THE SYNOD OF QUEBEC ON
S. BARNABAS DAY, 1888, BEING THE TWENTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSECRATION OF
THE LORD BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE.

BY THE

VENERABLE HENRY ROE, M.A., D.D.,

ARCHDEACON OF QUEBEC, VICE-PRINCIPAL AND HARROLD PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BISHOP'S COLLEGE; AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN
TO THE LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC.

Printed by Resolution of the Synod.

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Sep'r 28 1916

*The Revd Dr. C. Roe,
with the title of
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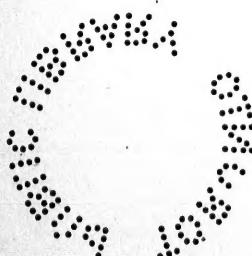
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Then the Church which was in Jerusalem sent forth Barnabas to Antioch. For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord. Acts, xi. 22, 23.

The character of St. Barnabas, drawn out as it is with almost unexampled fulness in Holy Scripture, is peculiarly beautiful and attractive. Its special characteristic seems to have been goodness, "he was a good man." Goodness, not in the general sense of the word as signifying an upright or righteous man, but goodness as distinguished from other virtues—as St. Paul distinguishes it when he says that "scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die;" goodness as signifying genuine kindness of heart, the disposition which finds its highest satisfaction in seeing and making others happy.

This beautiful disposition was evidently possessed by St. Barnabas to a degree quite unusual, insomuch that the Apostolic College bestowed upon him the unparalleled honour of a new name which should embalm it forever; a name taken from the distinctive title of the Holy Ghost Himself—the Paraclete, the Comforter, the name of Barnabas, Son of Comfort, as if the very own offspring of consolation; a name which should teach the Church forever that his nature and his name was love.

That this was the true intention of the word

seems clear from the occasion on which it was given,—in recognition, as it seems, of his noble act of generosity in selling his patrimony, apparently at a time of crisis in the life of the Church of Jerusalem, to relieve some peculiarly distressing wants, a sacrifice which was just then so great a boon to the Church, so necessary, so influential an example, so pure in its motives, that the apostles felt that the only fitting recognition of it was the crowning it with so splendid a reward.

And this gracious disposition of Goodness, engrafted upon that which does not always, perhaps not often, accompany it, a strong, robust intellect and farseeing wisdom and prudence, was evidently what fitted St. Barnabas for the very important position he was called to fill in the Apostolic Church —that of being, more than any other individual, the connecting link which bound together the old order and the new.

We little realize, I think, how great an achievement this was. There on the one hand was the Church of Jerusalem, as it is so graphically set before us in the Acts, with the twelve Apostles sitting on their twelve thrones, no small narrow sect, but containing, as St. James its Bishop declared, “many tens of thousands of believing Jews, all of them zealous of the Law,” not one of them willing to entertain the thought that it was not to last forever, finding it hard to allow that any one could be a true follower of the Christ of God who did not love and practise its ritual. And we see on the

other hand, as set forth in his own Epistles by its great Apostle, the Church of the Gentiles, with its grand grasp of the all-embracing catholicity of the Body of Christ, with its ennobling sense of spiritual freedom, its deeply rooted firmness against Jewish formalism, and only too ready to trample with scorn upon the conscientious scruples of the Christian Jew. We see these two great Churches standing out as if they must be arrayed one against the other in bitter and hopeless separation. We look again and they are welded together into one living, loving Body.

And I think a careful study of the subject will show that to the happy influence of St. Barnabas may be traced, not perhaps the whole, but what was most important, the beginnings of this cordial union.

The twelve,—notably among them James, Cephas and John,—were the Apostles of the Circumcision; St. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles. Between them, until the union was thoroughly cemented, loved and trusted by both parties, stood St. Barnabas ;—a Levite and yet a man of Cyprus ; an Israelite indeed, and yet full of large hearted sympathy with the seekers after God among the Gentiles ; the personal friend of St. Peter, and yet capable of entering into the mind and heart of the great Apostle of the Gentiles as no one else could :—introduced to the twelve the newly converted Saul of Tarsus, standing voucher for his sincerity when all in Jerusalem turned away from him in

cold distrust ;—caused, at the next great crisis, the first admission at Antioch of Pagan Gentiles into the Church, to be accepted at Jerusalem as a genuine work of the Holy Ghost, and sought out and placed St. Paul at its head ;—gave the sanction of his honored name and personal devotion to the last and greatest step of all—the first launching forth of Apostolic missionaries from the shores of Syria, to preach the Gospel to the heathen in purely Pagan lands,—a work so full of difficulties to a Jew, so bristling with offence to all his religious scruples, that Barnabas' own cousin after his first essay of it turned back from it in dismay. Yes, and with him, too, originated, as it seems, the great healing measure of collecting alms on those missionary tours, as a loving tribute from the Gentile Churches for the poor Christians of Jerusalem. For all this work, Barnabas, by the great love entertained for him by the Christians of Jerusalem on the one hand, and by his large-hearted sympathy with the yearnings of heathendom on the other, won, as no other man could have won it, the full and formal sanction of the Mother Church of Jerusalem; and thus smoothed the way for the Church of the Circumcision, with all its natural prejudices, passing, when the great crisis came, with so little friction, with nothing of the nature of a revolution into the One Holy Catholic Church of Jesus Christ.

i. I have dwelt, Brethren, with greater fulness upon this work of St. Barnabas because it seems

to me, by one of those happy coincidences which our services are always furnishing, and which when we can trace them are so encouraging, strikingly to harmonize with and to throw a very beautiful light upon the object of our assembling here to-day.

We are met to unite with our Bishop in returning devout thanks to Almighty God for His gracious guidance of His Church in this Diocese through another generation of her life, during which we all gratefully recognize that our Diocese, under that guidance, has made healthy, happy progress in many directions, far beyond what we could have dared to hope. We see clearly that the foundations of her permanence in this land for all time have been well and solidly laid; that a great work for God has been done in the past; and that there lies before us the bright prospect of a still better work for God in the future. But what comes home with special force to my mind to-day is, how singularly like in character this period of the Church's life and work has been to that period over which St. Barnabas exerted so happy an influence. For, has it not been a period of wonderfully successful transition, of welding together the old and the new, of reconciling old ways of regarding the Church—her organization, her sustentation, the duties of her members—with the new ways which the exigencies of the times have called into existence, ways from which our fathers shrank away in fear? A period in which we have passed, as we now see, from

childhood almost to full-grown manhood, from the helplessness of dependence to the strength of self help, from being the church of a small colony of foreigners in the midst of an unsympathizing native people, a colony supplied with its religion, its ministers and their support from the alms of the old world, to what we are to-day, a church deriving its resources, its clergy, and best of all its laity, from the people of the land themselves, a church which has taken root firmly and lastingly in the soil, a church which is recognized on all hands, by friends and foes alike, as in the most essential sense of the words a Church of the Canadian people.

Indeed, it is hard to realize the greatness of the change which has passed over the mind of the Diocese in those twenty-five years. It is difficult for the younger men among us to believe that the anxieties and fears for the future of the Church which then beset the hearts of the most religious and experienced churchmen could have been seriously entertained ; especially when it is so plain that the very things which seemed to them unmitigated calamities have proved to be the greatest blessings—occasions of calling out the church's dormant powers and energies, and awakening her to love and good works far beyond what could otherwise have been gained.

Perhaps the best illustration of the attitude of mind of thoughtful religious elderly men then among us, and one which affords the best possible proof of the importance of this period of transition,

is furnished by the almost despairing terms in which our late revered Bishop Mountain, a man so unworldly in his personal character, and who possessed opportunities of a complete knowledge of the subject out of the reach of other men, speaks of the prospects of the Church. In a confidential letter to his son, * his own deep feeling comes out most pathetically. "I have signed the letter," he says—a letter reducing the services in some mission which had failed in its engagement—"and feel something like King Charles when he signed the death warrant of Strafford. Our people are not ripe for the self-supporting system, and we cannot—I am sure I cannot—carry on the church upon that principle. I hope it may please God to look upon us, and open some unlooked for way of deliverance from our difficulties. Everything at present looks very, very black." In a letter written about the same time to the Society in England, † remonstrating against a proposed reduction in their grant, which he does in words of extraordinary warmth, he writes:—"My poor Diocese—what is to become of the flocks? My poor clergy—what are they to do? Their spirits are discouraged, their energies of soul broken." But most clearly does his deliberate judgment come out in the calm and well considered words which he addressed to the Synod at its second session in 1860. "It cannot be concealed," ‡ he

* Bishop Mountain's Memoirs, p. 342.

† Memoir, p. 348.

‡ Synod Journal, 1860, p. 16.

said, "that we have had, and have now great difficulties to be faced. We have lost the countenance and recognition of the Government. We have been despoiled of our patrimony ; and the great Society which has nursed the Church in the Colonies has been carrying out for some years a system of gradual reduction in the aid hitherto extended to us. Our people in the meantime have become habituated to lean upon extraneous aid, and are slow to learn the necessity of making adequate exertions and sacrifices of their own." And then, after speaking at much length of the poverty of the Diocese, he closes by saying : "The Diocese of Quebec does not, humanly speaking, present a very encouraging aspect to those who have its wants and interests in charge."

How completely, how happily, have all these dark forebodings been proved groundless by what we witness to-day ! Instead of ruin and decay we see everywhere life, energy, progress ; —the Parishes in the Eastern Townships, the English speaking part of the Diocese, doubled in number ; the stipends of the Clergy increased by one half ; the material equipment of our Diocese for its work regarded by the whole Church in Canada with admiring envy ; our admirable financial organization known everywhere as *the Quebec System*, securing, as nearly, I believe, as it is possible, the independence of the Clergy, at the same time that they derive their income from their own flocks ; our local endowments securing Pastoral care for all

time for the parts of the Diocese most sparsely peopled, and making it easy for the wealthier congregations to take a generous share in outside work ; a provision, steadily increasing, made for our Clergy when aged or infirm ; the Diocese covered with Churches and Parsonages, many of them models, most of them built under the new order ; our Church University endowed almost afresh, and nobly equipped for its work. For so poor, so thinly peopled a Diocese to have provided for itself, within twenty five years, almost exclusively out of its own resources, all these various endowments, aggregating as they do so large a sum of money, and that, too, while in the midst of the hard struggle to make its missions self supporting, is an achievement, I think, unexampled.

But the Spirit of self-help is a noble and masterful thing. It develops Christian manliness and self respect. When we see openings for pushing the work of the Church aggressively into the parts of the Diocese as yet unoccupied, we do not go to England ; we appeal to our own people, and the means are eagerly supplied. And with self-help, unselfishness grows apace. There is a zeal for taking our full share in the Church's missionary work far from our own borders, and the money so sent away increases steadily year by year. Yes, and the spirit of self-help is mighty to develop the spirit of religion, of spiritual mindedness. We stretch out our hands to our brethren of the laity to come to our aid in the spiritual work of the

Church, and their serious earnest response fills our hearts with joy. Yes, Brethren, we have passed from the old order to the new. The change has been indeed a great one; and what can we say to day but this:—"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we rejoice?"

2. And if this period of the Church's life resembles the days of St. Barnabas as a period of transition, may we not also thankfully trace the success which has marked it to the same religious spirit and temper which produced such marvellous results in the Apostolic Church? Surely if ever the force of goodness, of kindness and sympathy, were manifest in the Church's life and development, it has been there. I do not now refer to particular persons, but to the spirit and temper which has made itself felt all through in the great and difficult work which has been done. The Diocesan Board, with the Bishop at its head, on the one side, was entrusted with the arduous task; on the other, co-operated with them the whole body of the clergy, churchwardens and laity in general. Try to take in at one view the difficulties of carrying—let us not say a whole diocese,—but any one parish,—from the first beginnings of learning to contribute to the full manhood of self support. What is harder than to persuade men to give their money for anything so intangible as religion? To give it regularly and systematically, year after year, under all circumstances? We know how almost impossible it is to form the habit even in sincerely religious

people—what miserably mean and false excuses they will delude themselves with for drawing back from their promises. All this intensified in our case by the force of habit—habit wrought into English Churchmen by not being required for generations, for centuries, to do anything for the support of religion. Then when you come to organize a system for gradually training a parish in self support, how difficult to find men to carry it out—the Clergy naturally shrinking from what looks like asking for themselves; Laymen finding it scarcely less distasteful to ask over and over again for what is evidently given grudgingly and of necessity; and when finally the outside Body comes in to compel regularity in payments, all naturally looking upon it as a common enemy.

To overcome all these difficulties, how much of tact, of delicacy, of wisdom must have been exhibited! Mingled with the necessary firmness and persistency, how much of patience, how much of kindness and sympathy! And when we remember with how little of friction in the process, of heart burning, of coercion, the splendid result of the emancipation of a Diocese has been effected, and witness the confidence there is reposed everywhere in our central organization, as shown in the self supporting parishes coming forward and voluntarily replacing themselves under its wise and helpful discipline, we must recognize how largely the spirit of Barnabas; of goodness, of brotherly kindness, must have had rule to bring about results so truly happy.

3. In reviewing the progress made during this period of transition, I have been naturally led to speak of the departments of the church's work, which occupied so painfully the thoughts of wise and good men at its beginning. But the material progress which has been made, remarkable and thanksworthy as it is, no one of us regards as the most important. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." The proper work of the Church, we never forget, is a spiritual work, a work which goes on out of sight in the spirit of man—"righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The prostration of penitence, the strength of self government, the absorption of prayer, the rapture of praise, the joy of meditation, the living flame of adoration,—such a personal "knowledge of God and of His Christ" as "is" itself "Eternal Life,"—this, indeed, is the greatest of all realities. But when we come to estimate progress in it, we are baffled. How shall we get within the sanctuary of the spiritual man's heart, and open up its doors to the gaze of the world without? But our Lord has given us a safe rule of judgment, "By their fruits ye shall know them." And may we not humbly trust, as we review God's mercies today, that we have these fruits to comfort us? I have spoken of the Spirit of goodness, of loving sympathy and brotherly kindness, which has so wonderfully borne rule during the last twenty-five years in the entire complex of our Diocesan work. This surely is one of the most precious fruits of the

Spirit of Jesus Christ. But is there not more than this? Is there not another manifest bestowal upon our Diocese of the spirit of Barnabas, which ought not to be passed over on such a day as this? Is there anything more characteristic of the Diocese of Quebec—how can we sufficiently thank God for it?—than its freedom from party divisions, its religious unity? It was not always so. The older men among us can remember when names of division were freely bandied about—and the evil spirit of party tried hard to divide brother from brother. But the loving, large-hearted spirit of Barnabas has prevailed. Breaches have been healed. Party spirit has been banished. Suspicions and distrust have died of inanition. The whole Diocese has grown together into one loving Body upon the true principles of religious faith and religious freedom. "In essentials, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, charity,"—here is the true secret of religious unity. And this noble oracle, honestly believed and honorably acted upon, has been, I am firmly persuaded, the true source of the blessed religious peace, which God has bestowed upon us, inspiring us with mutual trust and confidence, making us willing, so long as the essentials of Christianity are sincerely held, and so long as there is true loyalty to the plain utterances of our Mother, the Church of England, that each should think and speak upon matters of opinion with perfect freedom and without reproach. O let us earnestly ask of our Lord to-day that it may continue so unto the end!



4. So much then for the past. And for the future, Brethren, what shall we say? What shall we say but this,—remind ourselves that God's mercies and blessings are not gifts in the review of which we may calmly settle down content with what is, but that they are instruments intrusted to us by Him by which He calls us to win greater victories for Him in the future.

When we review the history of this Diocese—in no boastful spirit but in a spirit of humble thankfulness—and see the hand of God so conspicuously manifest in all its history, first and best of all in giving it for its first three Bishops, true saints, and see ourselves reaping in joy to-day, in the quietness and peace and goodness which reign among us, in the strength and life of our Diocesan organization, in the hold that true religion has upon the hearts of our people, the fruits of what they sowed in tears; when we see the great body of our men, not conspicuous by their absence from the house of God, but regular attendants on His worship,—yes, and even more than that, the great body of our men devout communicants; when we think of the brightness, beauty, dignity, above all heartiness of our religious services; when we, the clergy, turn our thoughts upon our people, and you, my brethren of the laity, upon your brother churchmen, and see all around us many a one in whose life the meekness and gentleness of Christ are too clearly shining to be concealed,—then, I say, we are to account that these precious

gifts to us are instruments, in the strength of which we are to set ourselves with fresh faith and love and self-denial to win for our Lord all that yet remains unconquered.

Suffer me, then, in conclusion, to specify some of those fields of victories lying open before us as a Diocese which we ought firmly to resolve shall be won for our Lord, when now we separate and return each one to the quiet round of his daily work once more.

1. And first, if the great feature of the past for which we have been returning thanks has been the winning step by step in a steady progress, the emancipation of our Diocese from a state of dependence, obviously our first duty is to complete as soon as possible that emancipation.

2. And side by side with this duty stands our own home mission work to be carried on to completion. "There remaineth yet much land," within the limits of the Diocese, "to be possessed"—large tracts in the Eastern Townships, peopled by an almost exclusively English speaking population, where we have scarcely a foothold, but which we who live there know that the Church, if she can but be presented in the right way, can win.

3. And thirdly, there are the children of the Church, and our growing up youngmen and women, to teach, and train and keep. In this respect we, that we say not the whole Canadian Church, conspicuously fail. The Sunday School system has broken down in our hands; and, if it is not to die outright

and by its death to inflict a serious disaster on the Church, must be re-organized from its very foundations. In our Church Catechism, we have an instrument of instruction superior to anything the Christian Church has ever anywhere produced; but apart from this, we have no system of graded instruction for our young people; each Clergyman is left to supply it hap-hazard. But this is too large a subject to be further entered into here, and too grave a matter to be postponed. It demands the serious, the immediate attention of the Church.

4. And, fourthly, we stand face to face with another grave problem—how best to meet the dangers and discouragements of the ever onward steady flow of the tide of French Canadian settlement.

That our French Canadian fellow countrymen are increasing rapidly in this Province is unquestioned. Grave fears are felt that the English element is fated to be wholly driven out before them. And this is frequently dwelt upon in such a way as to form a serious discouragement to the Church's work, as if all permanent expenditure were wasted and all labor of that nature in vain. But surely these panic fears are unwise. What good can result, even in the face of an inevitable calamity, from weak complainings and cries of distress? If it be God's will that another race is to dislodge us and occupy the land, we ought not to regret it, for we know that His will must be the best. But there is no such certainty; and our

true policy is to refuse to entertain the thought and to encourage our people to hold fast to the land which is their own. In this way I am persuaded may we do most to stem the tide of French immigration,

On the other hand, we know that, situated as our Diocese is, it must always feel first and chiefly the effects of the French land-hunger. And besides this, we have always been losing and always must lose, as the American New England States for long years have lost, a large number of our members by emigration to what seem more favoured lands. And what, under these circumstances, is our duty? Surely it is, never to be disheartened by our churchpeople removing from us, but to more vividly realize that in that case they have been entrusted to us for this very purpose, to be specially educated and fitted for such emigration, so that when they go from us, they may pass into other parts of the Lord's great field—not like many who come to us from the old world, nominal churchpeople, who so far from being a help are a reproach and a hindrance—but as sound Churchmen, faithful Christians, "sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work," carrying with them, deeply rooted in their hearts, those loving principles of the doctrine and discipline of Christ's Church, which will make them sure to take their places at once wherever they settle, and begin to work as intelligent, loving members of Christ's Body. There are many hun-

dreds of the sons and daughters of the Church of Quebec, spread over the face of this continent; and may it not be that if we could see the healthful influence they are exerting, we should bless God for taking them from us?

This then surely is the work to which we should apply ourselves,—not, to sit down despondent because our numbers in some parts of the Diocese, if it be so, are thinning year by year, but the smaller the field becomes, to bestow upon it the richer culture, studying to develope the spiritual life in each man—“warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom”—remembering that each one is a jewel of inestimable worth, and may become, in other lands far away, a burning and shining light to the comfort of many souls and the glory of God’s most Holy Name.

5. And for the successful discharge of these great duties, we need two things,—we need an immense awakening of our religious laity to their duty with respect to the spiritual work of Christ’s Church, and we need a great increase of spiritually minded men, men with a deep inward sense of vocation, as candidates for Holy Orders.

We are only just beginning to awake, clergy and laity alike, to the realization of the true relation of the laity to the more spiritual part of the Church’s work. As we look back over the past quarter of a century, in whatever progress we have made has not the healthy influence of the laity been conspicuous? And what might we not

be, what might we not do, if the sincerely religious men among our laity were only taking the part they ought in the higher and more spiritual departments of the Church's work?

And is it not probably due to this very fact of the general severance between the spiritual work of the Church and the laity, that the church is suffering so seriously from an insufficient supply of fit men for the Sacred Ministry? How few have gone into the ranks of the Christian Priesthood from what are called the better classes in this Diocese—from the families, which for station, education or wealth, form the higher ranks in the social life of our country! This is a very grave matter, and one which calls for the most earnest and persistent efforts on the part of all who have the well-being of the Church and of the country at heart to have it remedied. Why do not the religious parents, especially the religious mothers, among us, give their sons to the sacred ministry? There can only be one of two reasons assigned, either because they do not believe the words of Christ when He sets forth the exalted position, the honors, and the eternal rewards of His faithful Priest;—or because they are not aware of their own influence, their own responsibility for directing their children's hearts this way.

6. And finally, must we not all feel to-day that for success in this great work, we need above all the gift in largest measure of the temper, the spirit of the Son of Consolation, the spirit of goodness,

of self-sacrificing love, of large hearted sympathy, with all sorts and conditions of men, the gift of the power of comfort from Him,

" Whose blessed unction from above
Is COMFORT, light, and fire of love?"

Yes, this is what we need to lead us on to victory, the power of sympathy which is the key to all hearts. May our Lord grant it to us all at His Altar to-day in largest measure!

And now I have done. But I shall seem to you to have quite forgotten him at whose invitation we are here to-day, to join him in giving thanks for the goodness and mercy which have followed him through his twenty-five years of service in the Apostolic office. But we have not forgotten. We know that for a Bishop of the church of God to be able to look back, as we have tried to do to-day, over the entire term of his ministry,—to see that he was called to lead and guide the Church through a period of trial, of change, of transition,—a transition which looked dark and gloomy at the outset, which how it would end no one could tell, a prospect which filled many a brave heart with deep anxiety,—that he is able to look back over it and see that the whole period has been one of healthful progress, of great moral victories honestly fought out and fairly won, and that the result is quietness and peace and goodness, now, and for the future an ever brightening hope,—than this, what greater comfort, what greater joy

could there be? It is true that we cannot say here in the presence of our Bishop all that we feel, but we can say this,—in committing him to God's mercy and protection, now that we are parting with him for a little while,—we can say to him, what indeed he knows well without our words, that after his twenty-five years of going out and coming in among us, he possesses the hearts of his people, clergy and laity alike. And, next to a conscience witnessing to integrity before God, surely this is the sweetest of all joys, the highest of all rewards.